

officials' merit-based judgment to approve the application was overridden by political appointees carrying out a political agenda.

He said he believed while he was testifying that the facts were being “deliberately . . . mischaracterized” by the Senators, although he acknowledged he did not know then what had actually happened.⁶⁴⁴ He characterized the questioning as “intense” and “badgering.” Babbitt noted as evidence that the Senators were not attempting to ascertain the truth about what happened in the Hudson matter the fact that they had not interviewed George Skibine, whom he described as a “major player” in the Hudson matter:

And what the Senate Committee did to me I'm really still burning about because they did not call George Skibine. They did not depose him.

And they set that hearing up in a way deliberately to make it look like this was a political - - “political deal” in which my staff, the political people, reversed the Hartman memo which they characterized as a consensus staff recommendation that went straight to the political people.

And I believe to this day that the staff of that investigating council deliberately tried to hang me. They didn't even mention George Skibine.

Now, I had never met George Skibine, but I had enough briefing before that hearing that I understood that George Skibine, who the senate did not come near or bothered to interview, was, in fact, a major player.

And I'm there trying to - - getting raked over the public television and I'm at least trying to get George Skibine back in the game because they deliberately kept him out.⁶⁴⁵

Babbitt testified before the Senate that the decision in Hudson was made based on the recommendation of Skibine, an 18-year civil servant. In the Grand Jury, however, Babbitt

⁶⁴⁴Babbitt G.J. Test., July 7, 1999, at 267.

⁶⁴⁵Babbitt G.J. Test., June 30, 1999, at 193-94. The Committee's records show that the Secretary testified on Oct. 30, 1997, and that Skibine was interviewed on Nov. 17, 1997.